TUGHLAQ ADMINISTRATION IN THE LIGHT OF EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

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The epigraphic records of Tughlaq period, are quite large in number and throw much light on administrative institutions, and the posts of officials. Modern scholars writing on the pre-Mughal administrative system have not yet fully utilized these records, and have relied almost exclusively on information in our historical texts. An attempt is made in this study to reconstruct the administrative system of the Tughlaq period on the basis of the published epigraphs in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit languages, which not only corroborate but also add something new to the known literary evidences.

The founder ruler Tughlaq Shah, in fashion of the early rulers of Delhi, adopted the compound honorific title 'Dunya Wa'd-Din' (world and the faith) and styled himself 'Ghyasu'd-Dunya Wa'd-Din[1] (Inscription of 1321 AD). Following Tughlaq Shah, the later rulers Muhammad Shah and Nusrat Shah assume the titles '*Shamsu'd Dunya wa'd Din*'[2] (Inscription of 1395 AD) and '*Nasiru'd-Dunya wa'd Din*'[3] (Insc. of 1390 AD) respectively. Deviating from the norm, Muhammad bin Tughlaq preferred titles such as '*Nasir Amir ul-mominin*,[4] (Inscription of 1328 AD) '*Khalifa Din Panah*'[5] and '*Khalifa Jahanpanah'*[6] (Inscription of 1332 AD) etc, while Firuz Shah adopted the honorific title '*Al-Wasiq ba ta'id-i-Rahman*' (hopeful of the support of the Merciful).[7]

The most exalted regal title used by the Tughlaq rulers was the '*Sultan*' (Arabic), in Sanskrit '*Suratarana*' (Inscription of 1328 AD)[8] and its Persian equivalent '*Shah*', '*Badshah*' and '*Shahanshah*', while in the Sanskrit the titles *Raja* (Inscription of 1328AD)[9] and *Maharajadhiraja* (Inscription of 1326 AD)[10] are used. The epigraphs frequently recorded the compound regal title, such as *Sultan-i-Alam* (Inscription of 1321 AD, 1360 AD),[11] *Shah-i-Alam* (Inscription of 1322 AD), *Badshah-i-Haft Iqlim* (dated 1322 AD), *Shah-i-Afaq* (dated 1321 AD), *Sultan al-Muazzam* (dated 1325 AD),[12] *Badshah Jahanpanah* (dated 1326 AD),[13] *Sultan-i-Azam* (dated 1328 AD, 1333 AD, 1361 AD & 1373 AD),[14] *Shahanshah-i-Jahan* (Inscription of 1353 AD & 1383 AD),[15] *Sultanul-Ahd wa'l-Zaman* (dated 1363 AD),[16] *Shah-i-Azam* (dated 1395 AD),[17] *Badshah-i-Muazzam* (dated 1381-82 AD)[18] etc. Further, the epigraphic records also invoke the view adopted by *akhlaq* theorists that the monarch was 'the shadow of God on earth', or '*Zill-i-Allah*'.[19]

In turn, the Sultan bestowed *laqab* or titles honour upon provincial governors and commanders.[20] These titles were usually by way of grants of special names with the suffix '*daula and din*' (state and faith), such as *Ikhtiyaru'd-Daula wa'd-Din* (Inscription of 1321 AD),[21] *Fakhru'd Daula wa'd-Din* (Inscription of 1326 AD),[22] and *Shamsu'd-Daula wa'd-Din* (Inscription of 1371 AD).[23] The Sultan also bestowed the title of *Khan*, *Malik* and *Amir* upon the nobles which broadly indicate their status among the nobility.[24]

Some modern scholars tend to interpret the title '*muluk-ush Sharq*' (Inscription of 1323 AD, 1326 AD & 1385-86 AD) implying that its holder was given charge of the eastern province of the Sultanat. However, it seems more likely that *muluk ush-Sharq* denotes either rank of the nobles or office, as the term variously occurs not only in the inscriptions of the eastern provinces but also in those of Rajasthan, Gujarat and even Karnataka.[25]

The title Sultan denotes a sovereign, thus the territories ruled by him was termed as *mulk* (Inscription of 1367 AD)[26] and *mumlakat* (Inscription of 1385-86 AD)[27] while the country's *Hindustan* also occurs (Inscription of 1324-25 AD).[28] The term *dar-ul-mulk* denotes the capital: the capital town Delhi was mentioned with the prefix *hazarat* in a *farman* of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, dated 1325 AD.[29] The court insignia referred as *takht / Sarîr* (throne) and *tâj* (crown).[30] The Sultan deemed to be the pivot of the kingdom or *madar-i-mulk*[31] and the royal court, the *dargah*[32] (Inscription of 1357 AD), the *dargah-i-Ali*[33] (Inscription of 1371 AD) and *bârgâh*[34] (Inscription of 1332 AD), as the centre of the whole administrative apparatus.

The phrases '*ahd*[35] (Inscription of 1324-25 AD), '*ahd-i-daulat*[36] (Inscription of 1332 AD), *ahd-i-Khilafat*[37] (Inscription of 1331 AD), *ayyam daulat*[38] (Inscription of 1323 AD) and *ayyam-i-Khilafat*[39] (Inscription of 1332 AD) indicate the period of reign and government of the sovereign, while *naubat*[40] (Inscription of 1333 AD), *iyalat*[41] (Inscription of 1324-25 AD), *naubat-i-iyalat*[42] (Inscription of 1371 AD), *ayyam-i-imarat*[43] (Inscription of 1315 AD) and *waqt*[44] (Inscription of 1361 AD) refer to the rule and administration of either the sovereign or an official. Generally, the term *naubat* means the administration and governorship, but in one inscription of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (dated 1315 AD) the term denotes sovereignty.[45] The word *imarat* (Inscription of 1315 AD) denotes the office of *amir* or noble, not the kingdom.[46]

Being an executive officer, the *wazir* was the head of the government machinery. A Sanskrit inscription of Chunar (dated 1333 AD) records that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq had appointed a

Hindu Sai Raj as his *wazir*.[47] The office of the *wazir* was called the *diwan-i-wizarat* or Revenue department. Thus, *wazir* was the incharge of central finance department. A *farman* (dated 1325 AD) of Muhammad bin Tughlaq refers to the *wazir* as *Sahib-i-diwan-i-Al'a-i-wizarat*. The audit department or, the *diwan-i-ishraf* was closely connected with the *diwan-i-wizarat* as the *farman* suggests.[48] The *Khazin-i-mamalik*[49] or the treasurer of the kingdom (Inscription of 1385-86 AD) was probably attached to the *diwan-i-wizarat*.

As for the army organization, epigraphic records mention the word *fauj*[50] (Inscription of 1389 AD) and *Sainya*[51] (Inscription of 1328 AD) for army controlled by the military commanders. The terms *Sipahsalar*[52] (Persian, Inscription of 1371 AD) and *Isfahsalar*[53] (in Arabic, Inscription of 1396 AD) denote the commander-in-chief of the army. The words *mir*[54] (Inscription of 1365 AD), *Sâlâr*[55] (Inscription of 1324 AD) and *yoddha*[56] (Inscription of 1328 AD) indicate the chief or commander of a separate unit of the army. A Sanskrit inscription of Batihagarh (dated 1328 AD) mentions that Malik Julachi was made commander (*yoddha*) of the Kharpara armies and governor of the Chedi (Bundelkhand) territory.[57] The *Hajib* or Chamberlain was also attached to the army, besides his household duties. A Farman of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq refers to one Kamal ud Daula as *malik mulukush-Sharq* and *al-Hujjab-i-Sipahkash-i Zaman*.[58] The word *Sawar*[59] (Inscription of 1400-01 AD) indicates a horseman, while the *akhurbek maisara*[60] (Inscription of 1333 AD) corresponds to the superintendent of the left wing of the royal cavalry. The *paigah-i-khass* denotes the royal stable or the department of stables, which was supervised by the *Shahna-bek*.[61] As a weapon, *gurz* (mace) and *khanjar* (dagger) find mention in Ghyasuddin Tughlaq's inscription of 1322 AD.[62]

As for the judiciary, the *Sadr*[63] (Inscription of 1361 AD) was the minister of religious affairs and was appointed in the centre as well as in the provinces. The epithet *Sadr-i-Zamana*[64] (Inscription of 1384 AD) and *Sadr ul-Akabir*[65] (Inscription of 1385-86 AD) probably indicate their ranks. The word *qazi*[66] [pl. for Judge, dated 1384 AD, (pl. *quzzat*)] also occurs. The phrase *aqzal-i quzzat*[67] (Inscription of 1382-83 AD) refers to chief judges. A new term *Qazi-i-Muhr-i-Khas*[68] (Inscription of 1346 AD) probably denotes the *qazi* of the royal seal keeper. However, the meaning of the designation or the nature of the work of that office is not certain. It seems that the *Sadr* was chosen among the *qazis*, since an inscription of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (dated 1384 AD) mentions Qazi Husamuddin Hasan as *Sadr-i-Zamana*[69] (the *sadr* of the age). A new office *diwan-i-Khairat* was, probably,

introduced in the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. The officer of this department was termed as *Sahib-i-Khairat* or master of the charity (Inscription of 1364 AD), being usually appointed from amongst *qazis* or men of religious repute.[70]

The administrative machinery of the royal household was quite elaborate. The epigraphs refer to some officers of the palace as *pardadar*[71] (Inscription of 1400-01) (the curtain bearer) and *sar-i-pardadar*[72] or the chief curtain bearer; *buqchadar*[73] (Inscription of 1332 AD) or lit. a krapsack bearer; *tan-i-Jamdar Khana*[74] (Inscription of 1339 AD) was an officer or keeper of the royal robes, who acted as an essential member of the king's household. *Dawatdar* or *dawidar-i-khas*[75] (Inscription of 1361 AD) either worked as the royal inkstand bearer or keeper of the royal treasury. The *sar-i-dawidar-i-khas*[76] (Inscription of 1333 AD) corresponds to the chief of the keeper of the royal treasury. The *Hajib* or Chamberlain acted as a leading official of the household. A new term *Hajib-i-Hinduan-i-mamalik*[77] was used to denote the Chamberlain for the Hindus of the Kingdom. This office was created during the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, probably to deal with Hindu officers coming to the court.

The empire was divided into provinces and each province was being governed by the governor. A province was variously termed as '*arsa*[78] (e.q. *arsa-i-Gujarat*), (Inscription of 1326 AD); *Khitta*[79] (e.g. *Khitta-i-Badaum*), (Inscription of 1325-26 AD); *Kshetra*[80] (e.g. *Gaya Kshetra*) (Inscription of 1372 AD), and *mandala*[81] (e.g. *Magadha mandala*, an ancient name of the *Khitta-i-Bihar*), (Inscription of 1352 AD). The governor of the province was variously called as *Wali*[82] (Inscription of 1326 AD), (e.g. *Wali-i-arsa*'); *Hakim*[83] (e.g. *Hakim-i-Khitta*) (Inscription of 1396-97 AD); *Adhikari*[84] (Inscription of 1372 AD); *Mandaleshwar*[85] (Inscription of 1354 AD) and *Mahapradhana*[86] (e.g. *mahapradhana* of *Maharashtra mandala*), (Inscription of 1326 AD). A bilingual inscription of Petlad (Insc. 1323 A.D.) preserves the term *divan* in Sanskrit as on equivalent to Persian term *muqti* for governor of the province.[87] The tenure of the *Hakim* was termed *Hukumat*[88] (governorship), (Inscription of 1381-82, 1385 AD). It seems that some provinces (*Vilayat*) were governed by the *Wali* / *Hakim* or civil governors, while the others were administered by the *Muqtis* or military governors. However, during Tughlaqid period the term *'iqta* for a provincial administrative unit came into prominence. Thus, the epigraphic records frequently mention *'iqta* or *muqti',* instead of *Wali* or *Vilayat*.

Some inscriptions mention *muqti*[89] (e.g. *muqti-i-Bihar*), (Inscription of 1353 AD) as a provincial governor and *iqta'* as an

administrative division. It is worth noting that the first reference to *iqta* (Inscription of 1333 AD) occurs in the Bari Khatau Rajasthan inscription of Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq.[90] One inscription refers to the *muqta-i-iqta* (Inscription of 1380 AD) of Khambayat (Cambay) in Gujarat.[91] The term *naib-i-iqta*[92] (Inscription of 1324-25 AD) finds mention in Batihargarh / Rajasthan inscription of Ghyasuddin Tughlaq. In larger provinces, the *muqti* most probably himself appointed his deputies (*naib*) over important cities, as the reference to *naib-i-iqta* (Inscription of 1361 AD) of the town Khambayat indicates.[93] A Mangrol inscription of 1400-01 AD, mentions Zafar Khan as *muqti* of Gujarat, and he appointed Malik Badr, son of Banjhal as *naib-muqti* at Surat, who in turn appointed Malik Shaikh, son of Taj, as his deputy (*naib*) at Manglor, a port town.[94] The *iqta* also corresponded to a district and a town, as references to *muqti-'i-mamura*, district of Ajmer (Inscription of 1333 AD) and *naib-muqti'* (Inscription of 1400-01 AD) of Surat suggest.[95] We also find *muqtis* being appointed over sub-divisional units, e.g. *muqti qasba-i-Petlad* (Inscription of 1333 AD) and *muqti'-Shiqq-i* Surat (Inscription of 1403-04 AD).[96] Generally, the *muqti'* administered the districts and towns through local officials. Mawid Siraj, son of Fakhr, acted either as secretary or accountant (*muharrir*) at *mamura-i-Ajmer*.[97] *Muqti'-i-Bihar* Ibrahim Malik Bayyu posted Nasiruddin as local officer or, *sewak* at Rajgir in the Magadh *mandala*.[98] Likewise Khwaja Ahmad who was incharge of the town of Kalyana and Jamdadasa, was, probably, the secretary of the governor Qivamuddin Khan Qutlugh of the Maharashtra *mandala*.[99] In the same way, Khwaja Jalaluddin, a governor of the Chedi territory, appointed his servant Dhanau as manager (*Karmasthana niyojitah*) of a *gow-math*.[100]

The term *Shiqq*[101] (Inscription of 1395 AD) was used for a subdivision of a province. The *naib-shiqq* was appointed at towns and cities, as the reference to *naib-shiqq*[102] of Nagaur and Jalor (Inscription of 1389 AD) suggests. It seems that the *shiqq* was administered by a *muqti'*,thus the designation, *muqti shiqq* Surat[103] (Inscription of 1403-04 AD). It is worth mentioning that the historian Barani dates the establishment of the division of *shiqq* and *shiqqdar* during the reign of Sultan Mahummad bin Tughlaq,[104] while the term finds mention only in the epigraphic records during the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah.

A smaller unit still of the province was *parganah* (e.g. parganah Chatsu) (Inscription of 1381 AD), [105] or *pratigana* (Inscription of 1328 AD) (e.g. pratigana of Indraprastha)[106] of Sanskrit inscriptions. The next smaller unit was *qasba*[107] (e.g. qasba-Kalyan and qasba Sodhit) (Inscription of 1323 and 1396 AD). It is worth mentioning that

Isfahsalar Ikhtiyaruddin was the *wâli* (governor or official) of the town (*qasba*) of Sodhit.[108] It suggests that by the end of the fourteenth century the term *wâli* had been considerably devalued. Further, this particular inscription shows that the provincial officers could come from different parts of the Empire. The *wâli* of the qasba Sodhit (in Central Rajasthan), Isfahsalar Ikhtiyaruddin Buddhu, son of Jaafar al-Afghan al-Bakri, was an Afghan resident of the town Bhakkar.

The terms *mamura*[109] (Inscription of 1333 AD) and *Shahr*[110] (Inscription of 1321 AD) are used for towns and cities. The civil official or superintendent of the City was the *Shahnabek-i-Shahr* (Inscription of 1385-86 AD). The *kotwal* was the chief officer of the police. The epigraphs mention the *kotwal-i-dayar*[111] (Inscription of 1395 AD),[112] *kotwal-i-Khitta Badaun*[113] (Inscription of 1390 AD), *Kotwal-i-Khambayat*[114] and *kotwal-i-Hisar*[115] (Inscription 1390-91 AD), who thus managed the affairs of the towns and forts. The term *kotwalbek*[116] (Inscription of 1325-26 AD) of *Khitta-i-Badaun* suggests that the *kotwal's* jurisdiction in the town as superintendent of police could also extend to area around the city.

As for the local administration of the *mauza*[117] (village), (Inscription of 1328 AD), we find a reference to headman under the designation of *khot*.[118] One epigraph of Bhargaon (Gujarat), dated 1340 AD, refers to the grant of the village Bhargaon as *in'am* to his favourite slave Sumbul, the inn-keeper (*mihtar sarai*) by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah.[119] Likewise the bilingual inscription of Petlad (Gujarat), dated 1323 AD, records the grant of twenty kubhas of land, with boundary marked out, for the maintenance of a well.[120]

It seems that the large staff of lower officials namely *gumashta*[121] ('agent'), (Inscription of 1323 AD), *Karkun*[122] and *Khot*[123] used to collect taxes of *qasbas* and villages under the governorship of the *muqti'*. The collected revenue, *Kharaj* and *Jizya*[124] was deposited in the office of the *kotwal* (*diwan-i-kotwal*) (Inscription of 1403-04 AD).[125] The *mushrif*[126] (Inscription of 1323 AD) of the province worked as auditor while correspondence department was supervised by the *barid-i-Khitta* (Inscription of 1359-60).[127]

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11. EIAPS, 1964, pp.9-10.

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20. Cf. S. Jabir Raza, Nomenclature and Titulature of the Early Turkish Sultans of Delhi found in Numismatic legends, in Colloquium on Medieval Indian Coinages: A historical and Economic Perspective, ed. Amiteshwar Jha, Nasik, 2001, pp.91-92.

21. EI (A & PS), 1937-38, pp.6-7.

22. Ibid., 1933-34, p.27.

23. Ibid., 1949-50, pp.18-19.

24. Cf. Farman of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, Published in Islamic Painting and the arts of the Book, Delhi, 1325 AD, ed. R. W. Robinson, London, 1976, pp.283-4. My thanks are due to my revered teacher Irfan Habib, Professor Emiritus, for supplying me his own transcription from photo-copy of the original.

25. EI (A & PS), 1935-36, p.2. This Kalyan inscription of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (dated 1323 AD) refers the title as '*Malik muluk ush-Sharq wa'l-Sin*', which strengthened the above mentioned view. Also EI (A & PS), 1933-34, p.27; EI (A &PS), 1949-50, pp.18-19; EI (A & PS), 1962, p.27; M. Nizami, Bijapur Inscription, p.25.

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29. Detail of Farman, which is stated earlier; Also Barani, op.cit, pp.435. 552.

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43. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, op.cit, pp.15-16.
44. Ibid, 1962, pp.12-13; 37-38; Qeyamuddin Ahmad, p.68.
45. Cf. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, pp.15-16.
46. Cf. Idem.
47. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (J.A.S.B), Vol. V, 1836, pp.342-45.
48. Farman in *Islamic Painting*, pp.282-84.
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50. EI (A & PS), 1972, pp.34-35.
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70. Ibid., 1962, p. 24; 1964, pp.12-13. In one inscription *aqzal-quzzat*, qazis Jalal, son of Qutb was mentioned *Sahib-i-Khairat*, while other inscription referred Khwaja Kamil, son of Khan-i-Jahan as master of charity.
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113. Ibid., 1964, pp.19-20.
114. Ibid., 1962, p.6. Ibid., 1964, pp. 4-5.
115. Ibid., 1964, pp. 4-5.
116. Ibid., 1964, pp.7-8.
117. EI (A & PS), 1939-40, pp. 24-25.
118. EIM, 1919-20, pp.20-21.
119. Ibid., 1939-40, pp.24-25.
120. EIM, 1915-16, pp. 15-18.
121. EI (A & PS), 1949-50, pp. 31-32.
122. Ibid., 1919-20, pp.20-21.
123. Idem.
124. Idem.
125. EI (A & PS), 1968, pp. 22-23.
126. Ibid., 1949-50, pp. 31-32.
127. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, op.cit., pp. 42-43.